Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4204th meeting

Thursday, 5 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President	Mr. Andjaba	(Namibia)
Members	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Heinbecker
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/928)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/929)

Identical letters dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/930)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/934)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/935)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

00-67648 (E)

The meeting was resumed at 3.20 p.m., 5 October 2000.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Malta and Spain in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Balzan (Malta) and Mr. Arias (Spain) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 5 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Togo to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2000/958, and which reads as follows:

> "On behalf of the Organization of African Unity, I have the honour to request that the Security Council extend an invitation to His Excellency Mr. Amadou Kebe, Permanent Observer of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, to address the Council under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure during the Council's consideration of the item entitled 'The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question'."

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 to Mr. Kébé.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): Permit me at the outset to extend to you, Sir, our warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I wish to express my gratitude to Ambassador Ouane of Mali for his skill and experience in conducting the Council's work during the past eventful month.

You, Sir, come from a country that suffered greatly under colonialism, occupation, settlement-building, racism and trusteeship. Your country fought for its independence, freedom and dignity and you are therefore in the best position to appreciate the reality of the issue before us today. We are confident that, guided by your experience and wisdom, the proceedings and work of the Council this month will be crowned with success.

The occupation of Palestine by settlers from all over the world is a problem that has been before the United Nations since its inception. All organs of the United Nations have addressed this question, particularly the Security Council, without reaching a drastic solution thereto because the principal cause of the problem — the uprooting of an entire people and its exile, displacement and loss — has been ignored. Moreover, those who remained behind have been subject to the most horrendous practices — including imprisonment, torture, murder, the destruction of their homes, collective punishment and the confiscation of their land — and to daily offences by the Zionist occupation authorities and racist settlers aimed at forcing them to follow in the footsteps of their forebears.

The emerging revolution of that people demonstrates to those who would deny the existence of the Palestinian people that it is a living and extant people. It continues to struggle and fight, even with stones, for its survival and a dignified, free life and to maintain its rights over its land, on which it has lived for thousands of years and from which the Zionist settlers are trying to uproot it.

In recent days, the entire world has watched on television the images of dozens of defenceless youngsters and children being killed in cold blood and hundreds being wounded by the bullets of snipers, grenades, cluster bombs, tank shells and helicopter rockets. The killing of a Palestinian child, Mohammed Al-Durra, shook the conscience of the world and aroused international feeling. Many other atrocious scenes and images have not been caught on the correspondents' cameras. All this indicates one thing: there has been a premeditated design to kill, to massacre and to carry out a true holocaust ever since the Zionists planted their strange identity at the heart of

the Arab world five decades ago. They have done so in order to create and perpetuate new faits accomplis.

This bloody scenario recurs day in and day out in occupied Palestine. There are settlements that are heavily armed with lethal weapons. There are racist settlers who provoke the defenceless indigenous population and kill them. Massacres occur that recall Hollywood films portraying the brutal wild west. Land is confiscated. An army of occupation protects the Zionists. A super-Power is providing the deadly weapons and is defending these practices and blocking world condemnation of them by all available means within and outside the United Nations.

We have said before and we reiterate today that there can be no solution to the occupation of Palestine without the return of the Palestinian people to its land and the establishment of its independent State on the entire territory of Palestine, in which peoples of all religions will coexist. What is occurring in the so-called "peace process" is merely palliative. We all aspire to peace with justice; there can be no peace without justice. The events in Palestine are links in the chain of that people's revolt against occupation, expansion and annexation for the sake of its own independence, dignity and freedom.

Today, we can only salute the Palestinian people's struggle, pray for its martyrs and condemn Israel's genocidal practices. Israel has succeeded in usurping Palestine, displacing its people and controlling its farms, lands and waters. Today, it is seeking to deprive the Palestinian people of its mosques, churches and other places of worship. The massacre raging in the occupied territories is not the first and will not be the last so long as the international community remains unable to protect the Palestinian people and to help it recover its legitimate and inalienable rights and so long as the United Nations continues to be hamstrung by the considerable pressures exerted by a super-Power in an attempt to prevent the Organization from exerting its authority. Blinded by its bias in favour of the criminal, that super-Power justifies the brutal crimes any way it can and accords equal treatment to the executioner and to the victim so as to funnel more benefits to the criminal and satisfy the Zionist lobby for electoral purposes.

We call upon the Security Council to be honest with itself and to exercise its authority by taking deterrent measures under its Charter mandate. The Council must stop this brutal and barbaric Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. Is it possible for the Council to do this? Where is the humanitarian intervention we constantly hear about in this building? Where is the defence of human rights? Where is respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War? If this matter concerned Iraq, Libya or the Sudan, even by way of mere allegations, the Council would not have taken all this time to adopt resolutions and to implement sanctions.

In conclusion, we call upon the Council, first, to take necessary and effective measures to provide full protection to the Palestinian people and its property in accordance with the principles of international law and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949; secondly, to condemn the Nazi-like practices perpetrated daily by the Zionists in the occupied territories, which have been perfected by those who call themselves the victims of a holocaust at the hands of Nazi executioners and who now apply them perfectly against the Palestinians; thirdly, to condemn the use of lethal weapons and cluster bombs that are internationally prohibited against defenceless Palestinian demonstrators; and fourthly, to punish the criminals who have caused the bloodshed and perpetrated the crimes by ensuring that they are tried before an international court for their crimes of war and genocide.

The President: I thank the representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Sudan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also express our appreciation to the Ambassador of Mali for the commendable way in which he led the Council last month. Furthermore, we thank you, Mr. President, for calling this important meeting.

The Sudanese delegation wishes to express its heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs of the steadfast Palestinian people who were victims of the recent and continuing Israeli aggression and oppression.

Seven years ago the international community's hopes were raised that the peace process would lead to a just and comprehensive solution to problem of the Middle East, especially the Palestinian question. However, that optimism has dwindled day after day, owing to the intransigence of Israel, which consistently refused to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The visit of Ariel Sharon to Jerusalem to desecrate holy sites and the ensuing bloody actions, which did not even spare the worshippers inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque, were attempts to provoke a reaction from the Muslims and the entire Arab nation. The visit was undertaken under the protection of a terrorist force. Sudan view the visit as but one in a series of expansionist actions by which Israel seeks to consolidate its objectives, turning them into faits accomplis in order to render meaningless the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the final-status issues. The visit also exposed the fallacy of Israel's allegations regarding the issue of sovereignty over Jerusalem, a crucial issue dear to the hearts of the Palestinians and all Arabs and Muslim peoples.

What has been happening in the occupied Palestinian territories since the last week of September — the wanton killing of defenceless, unarmed Palestinian civilians — is in flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The Convention applies to all the territories that have been under Israeli occupation since 1967. It is clear that the Israeli Government supports and gives its blessing to these provocative acts of aggression, as well as to the torture and intimidation of unarmed Palestinian civilians before the eyes of the international community, without the Israelis' showing any remorse. The Sudan strongly condemns the massacres committed at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, massacres in which hundreds of Palestinians — including elderly people, youths, women and children — were killed, wounded or maimed.

The Sudanese delegation is confident that in addressing these heinous crimes being perpetrated against unarmed Palestinian people the Security Council will assume its full responsibility and protect them against being killed and tortured by the Israeli forces that are using the most sophisticated weapons of destruction. We also call on the Council to force Israel to implement all the relevant resolutions of international legitimacy, including 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to withdraw completely from all occupied Arab territories, including Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights and the remaining parts of southern Lebanon.

The Sudan urges the Council to put the necessary pressure on Israel to desist from oppressive practices and flagrant violations of human rights and to engage in the peace process in a transparent and serious manner. The Sudan also urges the Council to adopt the draft resolution submitted by the Non-Aligned Movement.

The Council's inability to fulfil its obligations towards the people of Palestine and to see that this people's rights are restored raises questions concerning its credibility within the international community and promotes the idea that the Council adopts selective policies and double standards.

Finally, the Sudan reaffirms its full solidarity with the people of Palestine in their struggle to defend their territory and maintain their dignity.

The President: I thank the representative of the Sudan for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Indonesia. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): My delegation would like to begin by extending its congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency at a time when the Council has been convened to consider an issue of critical importance to the international community.

This emergency meeting has been called to address a rapidly deteriorating situation in the occupied territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. My delegation cannot but express its profound concern at Israel's aggression against unarmed Palestinian civilians, resulting in scores of deaths and injuries. Such brutal tactics justifiably deserve global condemnation, and we therefore call upon Israel to immediately cease the incessant violence and bloodshed. Tragically, it is the women, children and elderly who bear the brunt of excessive, lethal force. No longer can the international community sit idly by while a defenceless people are mercilessly attacked by military forces.

Ever since the peace process began in 1991, the Palestinian people have been subjected to

procrastination, unkept promises and even outright intransigence. The stalled peace process had already heightened tension in the territories, as frustration and bitterness began to replace hope and optimism, particularly over the status of Al-Quds Al-Sharif. Thus the blatant provocation by Mr. Ariel Sharon in visiting Al-Haram Al-Sharif constituted a deliberate, intentional act to incite violence and thereby cause the loss of innocent life and material devastation.

Undeniably, there are some elements in Israel intent on disrupting the peace process as they wilfully disregard the ramifications of their actions. We were even more appalled that, despite the efforts of the Palestinian leaders to enter into a ceasefire agreement, the violence continued unabated as the situation worsened.

It is therefore incumbent upon the occupying Power to exercise restraint and abide by its duties and obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Every support should be extended to ensure the implementation of those measures. The compelling question here is the protection of civilians under occupation. Only through the realization of such protection can the situation return to some form of normalcy while they await the end of foreign occupation.

The fact that the Council has dealt with this conflict for so long makes it incumbent upon it to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to adopting a draft resolution, and it should proceed forthwith to implement the provisions of the resolution. For failure on the part of the Council to act in light of the increasing number of casualties would cast doubt on its credibility, and indeed moral stature, as a body that can take action, particularly when it has condemned instances of a lesser magnitude.

The use of military might can never detract from the historical and indisputable fact that Al-Haram Al-Sharif is an integral part of the occupied Palestinian territory, as reiterated in numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. It therefore behoves Israel to refrain in the future from using force, which would only further complicate an already volatile situation on the ground.

Sombre developments over the past few days show us how fragile peace can be and how essential it is to achieve a comprehensive peace, which should be based on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the principle of land for peace. Provocative acts and the perpetration of brute force against a nation and its people make it increasingly difficult to convince them that Israel is truly committed to take the path towards peace.

Far more is needed than mere rhetoric of words without follow-up concrete action to implement peace agreements already entered into, the lack of which can have dire consequences for security in the occupied territories, the region and beyond. At this critical juncture, as the spectre of violence looms, there can be no other alternative but for Israel to assume its solemn obligations and pursue in all earnest the peace negotiations.

The violent incidents that we have borne witness to is reminiscent of past strife, and it would serve the international community well to come to the realization that the patience of a people will endure only for so long. This is a time to strike out for real and bold peace with the valiant Palestinians. It is therefore our fervent hope that the ongoing talks in Paris and later in Cairo will result in ending the conflict and lead to the resumption of peace talks.

In order for this millennium to make a truly auspicious beginning, we should make every effort for the Palestinian people to regain their sovereign national rights in an independent homeland of their own. Only then can it be said that a just and comprehensive peace has been attained in the Middle East.

The President: I thank the representative of Indonesia for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Oman. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express to you, Sir, on behalf of my Government, our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. Undoubtedly, your diplomatic experience and skills are conducive to our deliberations' achieving the desired results. At the same time, we express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Mali, for the excellent and distinguished manner in which he steered the Council's work during September.

The Security Council is meeting today to continue a discussion of the utmost importance, on a serious matter threatening security and stability in the Middle East — the latest massacre of Palestinian civilians committed by the occupying Israeli security forces in Al-Haram Al-Sharif and the other occupied Palestinian territories.

My country expresses its profound sorrow and condolences to the bereaved families of the innocent people of the occupied territories that were victims of these bloody events. We condemn this military campaign launched by Israeli forces as a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which guarantees the protection of civilians in time of war and which has applied to the occupied territories since 1967.

What we have witnessed through the media of Palestinian youth, children and elderly caught up in the Israeli war machine must move world public opinion and drive the members of the Security Council to take a firm and responsible position against those who commit such acts.

At the core of this serious crisis lies the question of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, specifically east Al-Quds and the Old City, which Israel has been forcibly occupying since 1967, along with the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories.

There is no doubt that the international community, the members of the Security Council and international public opinion now realize that this massacre was triggered by the provocative visit by the leader of Israel's Likud party to Al-Haram Al-Sharif in defiance of the feelings of Muslims both within and outside the occupied territories. The Israeli Government decision not merely to approve that provocative visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif — which is the site of the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, which are holy to Muslims worldwide — but also to provide military protection for it was taken even though the Government knew its implications and consequences. That Israeli position inevitably makes us wonder about the Government's stand on the peace process and about its seriousness about achieving a peaceful final solution to the Middle East conflict.

Today more than ever before, the Security Council must shoulder its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, in conformity with the Charter and the principles of international law, by immediately adopting effective measures to compel Israel to cease its military offensive forthwith, to withdraw its forces from the occupied Palestinian territories, to carry out all its obligations and to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. It is imperative for the Security Council to send a clear message condemning this kind of State terrorism against civilians, and to call for an end to Israeli military extremism.

In conclusion, we call upon Israel to understand the sensitivity of the situation with regard to Al-Quds, which is sacred to Muslims throughout the world, and to refrain from taking any action that could affect the holy places — if it wants peace in the Middle East.

The President: I thank the representative of Oman for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of the United Arab Emirates. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me pleasure, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We are fully convinced that your expertise in international affairs will be a major contribution to the success of the Council's work this month. We wish also to convey to your predecessor, His Excellency the Permanent Representative of Mali, our thanks for his unstinting efforts and for the outcome of the Council's work, especially during its millennium summit.

This meeting is of particular importance in terms of putting an end to the volatile and extremely dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The present incidents began on 28 September when the leader of the Likud party, Ariel Sharon, accompanied by a large number of Israeli troops, stormed the forecourt of Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The next day, Israeli forces, under orders from the Israeli Government, launched unprecedented, brutal attacks on worshippers. This provoked and exacerbated tensions and heightened anger not only among Palestinians but throughout the Arab and Muslim world and among all members of the international community. It revealed Israel's dangerous, insidious intention to consolidate its occupation of the Palestinian territories, including Holy Jerusalem, the cradle of human civilization, of tolerance, and of the religious beliefs of the majority of the world's peoples.

The shameful images broadcast worldwide by the media clearly showed the brutality of the massacres and other crimes perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against unarmed Palestinians, including women and children. They have used weapons of all kinds — including helicopters, tanks, heavy artillery, missiles and weapons that are subject to international prohibitions — to kill stone-throwing children and to erode the peace process. It was supremely ironical — and unacceptable — that members of the Israeli security services disguised themselves in Palestinian uniforms to arrest and imprison Palestinian children and young people during the funerals of the martyrs.

In fact, this is not the first time that such things have taken place. Previous Israeli Governments perpetrated similar brutal crimes against unarmed Palestinians, starting with the massacres at Kafr Kassim and Deir Yassin, proceeding with the occupation of Palestine in 1948, which was completed in 1967, and continuing with the Sabra and Shatila massacres — which were orchestrated and supervised by Ariel Sharon himself in Lebanon in 1982 — and other subsequent massacres that we are still witnessing.

The political leadership of the United Arab Emirates accords the highest importance to the unfortunate developments in the occupied Palestinian territories, and was among the first to engage in political and diplomatic contacts with a view to containing the situation. Among such activities were two messages from His Highness Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, to the President of the United Arab Emirates, to the President of the United States of America and the President of France, as well as contacts by our Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation and with the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, with a view to taking decisive, effective international and bilateral measures to protect the Palestinian people and the holy places, and to put an end to the ongoing crimes perpetrated by the Israeli forces against unarmed Palestinians, including stone-throwing children and women. These violations contradict, in letter and substance, all the norms of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. They emphasize the need for the two parties, the Palestinians and the Israelis, to resume negotiations in order to seek a peaceful solution based on relevant resolutions and international legitimacy. There is also a need for an impartial international committee to investigate the causes of the crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people and prevent the recurrence of such crimes, in conformity with international law.

Despite the Paris meeting yesterday between the two parties, in the presence of the Secretary-General and the United States Secretary of State, to seek a ceasefire and a peaceful solution to the present situation, based on United Nations resolutions and the agreements concluded between the two parties, the Israeli Government continues to carry out massacres and aggression against the Palestinian people and to put them in detention. The number of martyrs exceeds 74, and there are more than 2,000 wounded, most in a critical condition. Israeli forces continue to destroy electricity stations in Palestinian towns and villages. Furthermore, they are arresting and incarcerating Palestinians simply because they are defending their legitimate rights, covered by resolutions on international legitimacy, as do other people of the world.

The United Arab Emirates strongly condemns these dangerous developments and incidents, the violations and brutal crimes that the Israeli forces continue to commit, and holds the Israeli Government fully responsible for the results of these crimes against the Palestinian people and for peace and security in the region. Therefore, we call on the co-sponsors of the peace process, other active countries and the Security Council to assume their legal, political and historical responsibilities. The Council, being responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, must defend its relevant resolutions on the Palestinian question by immediately implementing the necessary measures to end the oppression and brutal murders carried out by the Israeli forces throughout the occupied Palestinian territories.

In conclusion, we reaffirm our full solidarity with the Palestinian people and the Palestinian National Authority, and support their legitimate aspirations to an independent State, with Holy Jerusalem as its capital; the return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland, Palestine; and the removal of illegal Israeli colonialist settlements. We also emphasize that a just and lasting peace in the region requires the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), based on the principle of land for peace.

Without the Israeli Government's full compliance with those resolutions, based on international legitimacy, the problem in the Middle East will continue, resulting in an instability in the region that will reflect on international peace and security.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Mokhtar Lamani, Permanent Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Lamani (Organization on the Islamic Conference) (*spoke in Arabic*): The Security Council is meeting once again to consider Israel's serious, dangerous actions in the occupied Arab territories, resulting in the killing of innocent children, women and the elderly. Israel pays lip service to its desire for peace but pursues activities and practices that run counter to peace. The peace process, which started at the Madrid Conference more than nine years ago, reached an impasse because of those practices and actions and because of the fluctuating positions adopted by subsequent Israeli Governments towards the process and the commitments and conventions emanating from it. No one can predict the extent of the dangerous repercussions that will result if Israel goes back on the peace process, gradually evades its obligations and disregards conventions.

The Islamic Group has resorted to your Council, Mr. President, realizing that Al-Quds has a special status in the United Nations, the General Assembly and this Council. It also has an internationally irrefutable position. Previous resolutions adopted by the Council constitute the sound legal framework for this holy city. The Palestinian reaction to Israeli provocations and use of Israel's military machinery is evidence of its belief in its tireless struggle for self-determination and a decent life, free and independent in its homeland.

Israel stands once again against the current of history and the international trend to achieve peace, upholding its positions and policies on the basis of continued occupation, illegal terms, settlement activities, the confiscation of property, house demolitions, the Judaization and isolation of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the perpetration of aggressive acts against holy Islamic sites, particularly Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the collective punishment of the Palestinian people. All this spells out how determined Israel is to undermine and destroy the peace process and to spread tension and anarchy throughout the region.

Once again we reaffirm the firm position of the Organization of the Islamic Conference vis-à-vis the question of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the crux of the Middle East conflict. We support the Palestinian position, which is based on upholding sovereignty over Al-Quds Al-Sharif, including Al-Haram Al-Sharif, part and parcel of the Palestinian territories occupied since June 1967. The Security Council, given its weight in the international arena, must play a fundamental role in restoring the peace process to its proper track by pressuring Israel to implement resolutions based on international legitimacy and to abide by the agreements it has signed with the Palestinian leadership. The Palestinian people are a major partner in the peace process. Peace cannot be just or lasting in the region if that people do not regain their full legitimate rights, like other people of the world, and if Israel does not withdraw from all the Arab territories occupied since 1967.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kobayashi (Japan): My delegation expresses its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for providing us with the opportunity to present Japan's views on the grave situation we face today in the Middle East.

Japan deplores the escalation of violent clashes between Palestinians and the Israeli authorities in Jerusalem and other cities, in which more than 60 people, mostly civilians and innocent children, have been killed. We condemn the acts of provocation and are concerned at the instances of excessive use of force that have been observed in the past few days.

I wish, on behalf of the Government and people of Japan, to extend my sincere condolences to the bereaved families, and to express the sincere hope that the wounded will recover quickly.

In the hope of helping the wounded and saving precious lives, and in response to a request from the Palestinian Authority, Japan has decided to provide through the United Nations Development Programme $500,000 in emergency humanitarian assistance for the purchase of medical equipment, which is urgently needed in the West Bank and Gaza at this time of crisis.

Further casualties must be avoided. The immediate task is to halt the clashes as soon as possible. To this end, we strongly urge the parties concerned to act with utmost restraint and refrain from any further acts of provocation and violence. Nothing can be achieved through violence, which only claims more victims and leaves deeper scars in the hearts of the people.

In that context, Japan welcomes the diplomatic efforts that the parties concerned have made in Paris to reverse the cycle of violence, and we commend the initiatives taken by the United States, France and Egypt to facilitate such efforts. We appeal to the parties concerned to respond to the call of the international community for the cessation of violence and the avoidance of further bloodshed.

The current crisis attests most starkly to the need to realize a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. This is what the people of the region so desperately desire and what the international community is committed to achieving. We must not allow this crisis to derail the ongoing peace process. Japan reiterates its support for the efforts of the parties concerned to achieve peace. Japan remains committed to assist the peace process through various international forums and channels.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Morocco. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Zahid (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Moroccan delegation, I would first of all like to extend to you, Mr. President, our sincere congratulations on presiding over the work of the Security Council this month. I would also like to thank you for responding promptly to the requests addressed to you for the Council to deal urgently with the events that have taken place at Al-Quds Al-Sharif and in other parts of the occupied Arab territories. I would also like to congratulate and pay heartfelt tribute to Ambassador Moctar Ouane for the excellent and competent way he guided the work of the Council during the month of September and during the Council's Millennium Summit.

We have looked on with horror at the unimaginable scenes that have taken place in recent days on the esplanade of the mosque at Al-Haram Al-Sharif and in various towns of occupied Arab and Palestinian territory. We were aghast at seeing Israeli forces use so much violence against demonstrators who had legitimately risen up after the monstrous provocation by the head of that country's opposition. The police, which should have prevented Sharon from committing an irreparable act, fired upon those who were expressing the emotions, hurt and shock they felt at the moment.

However one interprets the facts, what happened is to be resolutely condemned. The figures that have been given include 80 dead and 1,000 injured, numbers one expects to see when fighting against an army, and not against a people.

At a time when we were beginning to see a glimpse of hope that Palestine and Israel would at last find peace and begin to try together to repair the dozens of years lost by the hundreds of thousands of people who have suffered in body and spirit; and at a time when we truly believed that wisdom was going to prevail over hatred, one man was allowed to call into question everything that had been so patiently and courageously woven together by people of good will. It will take a long time for the families who lost family members in these incidents to forget what has happened, and even longer for the hundreds of millions of believers throughout the world who felt their deepest beliefs insulted and their strongest values offended.

These inexcusable acts could have been prevented. Unfortunately, the violence continues. It is inadmissible and nothing can justify it. The Palestinian people did not have to be tested again in such a horrible way. They have made enough sacrifices and have paid their dues for peace and independence. Let them at last be allowed to live in peace and to bind their deep wounds.

Everything that has happened is so ghastly that those responsible for it should be ashamed of themselves. They should know that those who have unleashed these events and massacres undoubtedly wanted to destroy all the peace efforts made to date. They almost succeeded. At any rate, they have partially destroyed the large reserve of trust, which had already been eroded.

It is equally serious and reprehensible that the victims fell to the bullets of the police. The international community should understand that if peace, which has once again been jeopardized, does not soon see the light of day and is not defended by all,

both the immediate and the long-term future of this region near to all our hearts will be doomed.

Morocco extends its condolences to the families of the martyrs and reaffirms its support for the peace process. Morocco believes that there can be no just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region unless the principles that emerged from the Madrid Conference are respected, particularly that of land for peace, and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) are fully implemented, so as to help the Palestinian people regain their inalienable and legitimate rights, primarily the right to establish an independent State in their territory, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

We sincerely hope that the meetings that a number of countries, including France, the United States and Egypt, are attempting to organize will be successful, for there is no alternative to the imperative need to continue the peace process, regardless of the obstacles it faces.

The President: I thank the representative of Morocco for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Lebanon. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Tadmoury (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): Sir, we are pleased to see you preside over this meeting, and we are confident that your wisdom and skills will ensure the success of the work of the Council.

Once again the Security Council meets to discuss dangerous and bloody events in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the other occupied Palestinian territories. Once again the world witnesses the appalling behaviour of an Israeli official, the head of the Likud party. He is known to the Lebanese because of his role in the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The Lebanese people can never forget the images of the massacres and tragedies he inflicted on Lebanese and Palestinians alike. This man, on 28 September last, carried out an act of provocation — the violation of Al-Haram Al-Sharif — in the framework of an orchestrated scenario, with the goal of undermining hopes for peace. He was fully aware of the consequences of his actions, which were carried out in coordination with the Israeli authorities and under their protection. He has carried out bloody campaigns of repression, which continue to victimize many innocent people, children in particular. All of us were shocked by those murders.

Lebanon condemns Israel's continuing bloody campaigns of aggression against the Palestinian people and appeals to the Council to force Israel to respect the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the relevant protocols, as well as the Hague Convention of 1907.

I should like to remind all present that Israel has no right to act as it pleases with respect to Al-Quds and the occupied Arab territories. It cannot impose its will in contravention of the provisions of internationally binding resolutions and the framework of peace specified at the Middle East Conference — disrupting peaceful negotiations by staging internal disputes, preferring the logic of force to that of justice and right, and ignoring human rights, which are being flagrantly violated, in an unprecedented manner, in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and other occupied territories.

Al-Quds Al-Sharif has a special significance in our country. Its holy places are ancient, dating far back in the history of civilizations. We are sad to see Al-Quds Al-Sharif bloodsoaked and awaiting a just peace in the framework of international legitimacy. Today more than ever before the Security Council must endeavour to halt the deliberate provocations that are taking place in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, to put an end to Israeli violence, to create the necessary conditions for both co-sponsors of the peace process and the European Union, to bring the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict back to the negotiating table in order to achieve a just and comprehensive solution on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to realize the right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes, in keeping with the provisions of resolution 194 (III).

The requisites of peace are well-known now. The opposition and the Government of Israel would do well to realize that persisting in the use of violence will never lead to the peace and security we all aspire to. They must learn from recent experiences.

The President: I thank the representative of Lebanon for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Nepal. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): Let me begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your assumption of the

presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I thank you for convening this meeting to consider the topical and sensitive issue of the Middle East.

The Middle East is once again experiencing a new bout of violence. The bullets did not spare even a 12-year-old boy, Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra. Nepal is shocked by the loss of so many innocent lives as violence sweeps through Jerusalem, other places in the West Bank and Gaza. Nepal expresses its deep condolences to the families of those who were killed in the violence.

We had all hoped, not without reason, that the Middle East would soon see the dawn of peace. However, the recent eruption of violence is a disturbing reminder that the Middle East peace process is still precarious. There are people who would not mind derailing it.

We believe that there should be a full investigation into the flare-up, and that those who are responsible for precipitating it must be held accountable for their acts. The excessive use of force to control the protests has further vitiated the environment for improving the situation and retrieving the peace process. Nepal strongly urges all sides to exercise the utmost restraint, to cease hostilities and to prevent the peace process from derailing.

Peace might not be so urgent for those who take ill-conceived trips to sensitive areas, surrounded by a posse of security personnel. But it is truly urgent for ordinary people in Palestine and in Israel — for the people who are tired of living in fear; for those mothers whose children might be killed in episodes of violence on their way to school; for those widows who have lost their husbands to violence; for those old people who cannot run swiftly from the scenes of violence; and for those children who would otherwise have a long and fulfilling life ahead.

The present cycle of violence underscores all the more the urgency for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. In this context, Nepal fully supports the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return to their homeland and to have their own independent State, with Jerusalem as its capital. We also call for the implementation of all United Nations resolutions on the question of Palestine and for the withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories.

Nepal welcomes the Paris meeting of 4 October and the Cairo meeting that is taking place today in an effort to defuse the crisis. We commend the United States for taking those initiatives. The Security Council must swing into effective action to bring the situation under control without delay. Now is the time to leave mutual animosities behind, to build bridges and to apply energy and resources to promote peace and prosperity in the Middle East. All sides must exercise leadership to preserve the achievements made so far and move speedily ahead with the peace process, especially when the region is closer than ever to a durable peace.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Viet Nam. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me the opportunity to speak, for the first time before the Council, about the deplorable violent outbreaks that have taken place in the Middle East.

First of all, I should like to extend my warm congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for this month. I am confident that, given your diplomatic skills and wisdom, the work of the Council will be brought to a productive conclusion. I also wish to extend my appreciation to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Mali, for all the efforts he made during his presidency during the month of September. I also wish to congratulate all the other members of the Council.

We are deeply shocked and horrified by the unjustified killings of innocent people by the Israeli troops, which ushered in a new cycle of violence and excessive use of force in the eastern part of Jerusalem. Those tragic events posed a serious threat to the fragile peace, tirelessly worked out in the Middle East, and further testified to the need for more painstaking efforts to be made by all the parties concerned, so that talks can again get under way and the peace process be restarted.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of those who died or were wounded in the recent violence. We urge all parties to act with utmost responsibility and restraint and to refrain from any acts of a provocative nature, which would surely complicate the already volatile situation.

Our position on the Middle East is clear: we have consistently expressed our strong support for the peaceful settlement of the Palestinian question. We wish to reiterate our unreserved and unswerving support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland, as set out in the Hanoi Declaration adopted by the United Nations conference on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, held in Hanoi, Viet Nam, in March 2000.

We call on both parties to the conflict to make all efforts to overcome the current obstacles and persevere in their pursuit of a just and lasting solution to the conflict. We firmly believe that the only possible way to restore peace in the region is through a solution based on Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, on the principle of land for peace and on various international agreements signed by the parties concerned.

We welcome the continuing efforts of all the parties concerned, inside and outside the Middle East, to restore the peace process. We strongly believe that efforts for peace will prevail and that the Palestinian people will soon have the opportunity to live in peace — a peace that they deserve and for which they have courageously fought for so long.

The President: I thank the representative of Viet Nam for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is Mr. Amadou Kébé, Permanent Observer for the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations, to whom the Council has extended an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kébé (*spoke in French*): Thank you, Sir, for inviting me to take part in this meeting. I should like to convey to you my warmest congratulations on your accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. Given the steadfast commitment of your country, Namibia, to the ideals of the United Nations and the cause of peace and security throughout the world, there can be no doubt that, during this month of October, considerable progress will be made on all the items on the Council's agenda.

I also wish to extend congratulations to your predecessor, Ambassador Moctar Ouane of Mali, for the achievements in the month of September, the most remarkable of which was certainly the Council meeting of the heads of State.

The current violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is so serious that, if we are not careful, it could jeopardize the entire peace process that the international community has patiently and obdurately, year after year, in one attempt after another had managed to get on track.

In today's debate, the purpose of my statement is mainly to bring to the Council the statement made by His Excellency Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), on 4 October 2000 to express the OAU's concern at the serious turn events have taken in that part of the world so dear to us all.

> "I have followed with great concern the deplorable escalation of violence in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip where a great many Palestinians and Israelis have met their deaths and where hundreds of Palestinians have been injured.
>
> "This situation has arisen as a result of the visit that General Ariel Sharon, leader of the Israeli Likud party, made under a strong military escort to Al-Haram Al-Sharif, one of the most important holy places of Islam. The Palestinian people saw in this visit as a provocation. The demonstrations which followed degenerated into clashes between Israeli security forces and Palestinians. The Israeli forces have tried to repress the protests with violence, using excessive brutality and causing a great many victims.
>
> "I make a heartfelt appeal to the Israeli authorities for them to take every necessary measure to deal with the underlying causes of this resurgence of violence in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip and I call upon them to show restraint to avoid any further loss of life on either side.
>
> "I most particularly call on the Israeli and the Palestinian authorities to create conditions conducive to ending the violence that prevails and for them to enter into face-to-face negotiations so

as to arrive at a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region. In this respect, I welcome the recent initiative taken by the United States Government and express the hope that it may indeed defuse the crisis.

"Finally, I wish to reaffirm the support of the OAU for the Palestinian people in their struggle under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to exercise their inalienable national rights, including the right to return to their homeland and to recover their property, their right to self-determination and to establish an independent State on national territory, in accordance with the principles of international law and the relevant resolutions of the United Nations."

I thank you, Sir, for having allowed me to bring this important message to the Security Council.

The President: I thank His Excellency Mr. Kébé for the kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker is the representative of Spain. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Arias (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, I wish to offer you our best wishes for success in your work and to state that Spain endorses the statements made by the representative of France on behalf of the European Union.

Spain views what is happening in the occupied territories with the deepest concern. These events clearly show how easy it is for one obviously unacceptable and destabilizing act of provocation to spark a vortex of violence with tragic consequences which as yet cannot be calculated. In these circumstances, the disproportionate response of the security forces merely serves the interests of those who want the situation to get completely out of hand.

We consider that there is an urgent need now for both those directly responsible for the events and the international community to take whatever measures are required to lessen tension and violence.

To that end, in this very dangerous time, what is important, more important than ever, is to ensure strictest compliance with the international legal framework and international humanitarian law. It is also essential to ensure observance of the agreements between the parties aimed at ending the violence and to have the presence of the armed forces reduced to a minimum. It is also very important to have self-control and prudence on the part of all. Similarly, Spain considers that the establishment of an international commission to objectively investigate what happened could serve to reduce tension considerably.

These are initial emergency measures that should make it possible, within the peace process, to address the underlying causes of the crisis. The peace process, with the principles and terms of reference that were well established at the Madrid Conference, the Security Council resolutions and the subsequent accords, are the only common framework of reference that can bring about a political settlement of the crisis.

Spain hopes that the meetings held yesterday in Paris and being held today in Egypt will be able to give effect to the measures required and that the proper impetus can be given to the peace process, because the enemies of peace must be thwarted in their purposes.

We must not play into the hands of those who wish to sabotage the process.

It is very important to arrive at a peace agreement. The Palestinians need it. The Israelis need it. The international community needs this. It is deeply to be hoped that the window of opportunity is not being closed by these tragic events, because we need to make use of it. Even more important is that the agreement, particularly when it comes to Jerusalem, must be fair, acceptable and satisfactory to both parties. This is the only way to guarantee that it will be viable and lasting and that a just peace can be attained, which has been the hope of all the peoples in the region.

The President: I thank the representative of Spain for the kind words he addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Malta. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Balzan (Malta): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the current month and to express my appreciation to you for convening this emergency meeting on an issue which has shocked and saddened the international community.

The sight of the ongoing incidents in the Middle East region cannot but highlight the importance of the

resumption of the peace talks, which unfortunately have suffered a severe setback at a point in time when all those of good will were full of hope that, ultimately, the comprehensive and lasting peace that has eluded us for so long could be achievable.

Malta shares the concerns already expressed by the European Union regarding the ongoing incidents and supports President Arafat's request for the creation of an international commission entrusted with the responsibility of objectively determining the root causes and consequences of these incidents, which we cannot fail to emphatically deplore.

Malta unreservedly condemns the irresponsible provocations of those elements hostile to the peace process, triggering the violent reactions of the past days and resulting in the tragic loss of lives of civilians and innocent victims, including children. May I express our sincere and deepest condolences to the families of those who fell victim in these tragic events. Indeed, the shameful use of force perpetrated by those responsible for the maintenance of order is in clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. We concur with the view expressed by President Chirac that "one does not fight against the emotion of a people with armour".

We should not allow these incidents, however, to reverse or undermine the progress achieved so far in the peace process and we sincerely hope that all initiatives currently undertaken to put the peace process back on track receive the support and backing of all those who have the achievement of a lasting peace at heart. The tragic consequences of these unfortunate events should not discourage the international community. It should certainly not discourage the interested parties. These devastating circumstances should strengthen our commitment to the achievement of a comprehensive peace based on the relevant Security Council resolutions and in full respect of international law.

Let me end this brief intervention by appealing on behalf of the Government of Malta for an end to the current violent events and an immediate return to the negotiating table. It is only through constructive dialogue and political will that a lasting, just and comprehensive peace can be attained — a peace that would ensure that Palestinians and Israelis alike live peacefully side by side. We should not give up hope, nor should the parties involved. This is why it is so necessary to ensure that any hostile actions that undermine the achievement of such a noble objective are stopped. We are convinced that the international community continues to have faith in a negotiated, peaceful settlement.

The stakes may be high, but the price of peace is never too high.

The President: I thank the representative of Malta for his kinds words addressed to me.

I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for allowing me to make this additional statement. I will try as best I can not to make my response a rejoinder, despite the particularly difficult context that has elicited it.

In order to keep peace moving ahead, in spite of all the detours and setbacks that, in very painful and tragic episodes, have set the pace of the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians, we must exhibit a healthy restraint in act and in speech. As we see it, there is one choice only: the language of peace and the teaching of peace cannot include white-hot rhetoric. I therefore wish deliberately to speak in a muted voice so as clearly to enunciate convictions that are as earnest as they are necessary.

The first of these is on the need for a total and immediate halt to the violence in order to provide concrete and psychological support for the consultations in Paris and Sharm el-Sheikh between us, the partners in peace.

Only an abusively simplistic and reductive vision, only a perception that is obstinately one-dimensional could identify Israel as being solely responsible for the tragic deterioration that we have witnessed. With the passage of time, everyone will know and understand this better. The truth is far more complex than the systematically embroidered cliché of an Israeli war machine launched against defenceless Palestinian civilians.

Above and beyond young Palestinians throwing stones, acts of Palestinian violence are being committed by the armed militia of Tanzim and the Palestinian police. This armed and organized Palestinian violence, both civilian and military, is directly answerable to the hierarchy of the Palestinian Authority and is being carried out in strict obedience to it. This campaign is in itself a continual source of

provocation and bears heavily on the tragic course of events.

Moreover, even Mr. Marwan Barghouti, a member of the Palestinian Parliament and the head of Tanzim, makes no secret of this. His recent call for the wholesale killing of Israelis was based on the militia members at his service and on the green light given by the Palestinian Authority that supports him. In past times and in a far more upbeat context, I personally had the opportunity to promote peace with Mr. Barghouti at the many Israeli-Palestinian talks in Greece and as founding members of the Israeli-Arab alliance for peace in Copenhagen.

The visit of Mr. Ariel Sharon has been identified by most speakers in this Security Council debate as the primary cause of the outbreak of violence of the past few days. Some have gone so far as to imagine premeditated collusion between Mr. Sharon and Prime Minister Barak aimed at better establishing the Israeli right to sovereignty on the Temple Mount. Others have seen in it a loathsome profanation of Islamic holy sites.

These assertions seem to us to be so excessive that they deserve to be recorded so that we may underline, step by step, the full import of each.

First, whatever its motives and implications, Mr. Sharon's visit was undertaken in full compliance with the fundamental principles of Israeli democracy. Further, and because of this same democracy, Mr. Barak could not impede Mr. Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount. A clear and unbiased view of Israeli democracy would allow those who felt a responsibility to be objective to qualify their judgements and to distance themselves from entirely unfounded presuppositions.

Finally, it is out of absolute respect for Islam and its holy sites — Al-Haram Al-Sharif in particular — that I would like to contribute to this serious and solemn discussion. The Temple Mount is also the foremost holy place of Judaism. Confronted with the attempt — methodically pursued here and elsewhere — to conceal this fundamental truth, we need to affirm that the Temple Mount, sacred to Islam on the side where Al-Haram Al-Sharif is located, is equally sacred to Judaism for its more ancient layers, on which Jewish identity and history are based.

We believe this reminder is necessary not only in the context of the issue that concerns us here and now, but also for the dialogue aimed at reaching a definitive peace between the Palestinians and us. Only if the two sides are able to consider and accept each other's symbolic systems and political systems can peace be achieved.

Sudden progress and new forms of progress were achieved at the Camp David negotiations and in the negotiations that followed them. This progress was the direct outgrowth of the Barak Government's policy of peace. During those negotiations, the untouchable became tangible, the forbidden became palpable, and some huge difficulties were removed.

We find ourselves at exactly this crucial stage. President Arafat and his negotiators know this only too well. The international community witnessed this fact at the Millennium Summit. President Arafat and Prime Minister Barak were summoned by history to agree to a real peace — that is, a peace that cannot fulfil all the dreams and utopian visions of either side.

This discussion that has been spread out over several meetings of the Security Council could not have been more solemn and bitter. Some of the residue, some of the wilder scraps need, therefore, to be cleaned up. Calumny cannot lie forever hidden under the most forceful rhetoric. For example, there were the Bahraini and Libyan delegations' cold, oblique allusions to the Nazi regime, and the Iraqi delegation's repudiation of Israel's right to exist. As for Algeria, from the bottom of our hearts we wish that it might put an end to the succession of massacres occurring on its own territory. Such an action would certainly put it in a better moral position to denounce massacres occurring elsewhere.

In this unhappy and tragic moment in Israeli-Palestinian relations, there is a neither mawkish nor superfluous need for compassion. How can one not sympathize — from the heart, not condescendingly or arrogantly — with the strong feelings that the Permanent Representative of Palestine, Ambassador Nasser Al-Kidwa, expressed during his statement this past Tuesday. How can one not sympathize — with a torn soul — with the distressing death of the young Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra. It is with the Palestinians, not against them, that we cry, as we cry for our own dead.

At this point I would like to appeal with all my heart for a return to calm and the rapid coming of peace. This Israeli-Palestinian peace process is not yet completely free of all contradictions. Sometimes the

process brings us together, at other times it distances us. Our joint healing, our redemption, must be achieved by reaching peace with those near and far.

I would like to tell the Council the meaning of this last idea in Hebrew and in Arabic to simultaneously ll attention to the visceral closeness of these two languages and to the desires for symbiosis that unite us.

(*spoke first in Hebrew, then in Arabic*)

Peace, peace be unto those far and near, God said.

The President: The Permanent Observer of Palestine has asked for the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Of course we might have spared the members of the Council this additional intervention, but naturally I have to answer some of the points that were raised.

Allow me to start by informing the Council about some incidents that took place today. I am quoting from a news agency in English.

(*spoke in English*)

> "A 20-year-old Palestinian was shot dead by a bullet to his chest in the West Bank town of Beit Jala near Bethlehem. The director of the Beit Jala hospital said that at least one of the wounded admitted to the hospital had been struck by a dumdum bullet designed to explode inside the body. Witnesses said that another Palestinian man was shot dead as he tried to rip down an Israeli flag from the military post at the junction of Netzarim."

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Netzarim is a colony situated in the heart of Gaza, believe it or not. It is almost vacant, but its main purpose is to make the life of the Palestinians in Gaza almost impossible.

Today's events occurred despite the efforts deployed yesterday in Paris and today in Sharm el-Sheikh — and many of those who addressed the Council expressed their hopes and prayers that those efforts would be successful. Those efforts, regrettably enough, have not yet led to any specific positive results. During the meeting in Paris no agreement was reached, and this was basically because Israel rejected the idea of an international commission of inquiry.

What is more regrettable is that Mr. Barak did not go to Sharm el-Sheikh. He did not go there, although President Yasser Arafat and Mrs. Madeleine Albright were there. The four-party meeting was not held. It seems to me that this provides even more evidence of Israeli intentions.

Regarding the visit by Ariel Sharon, whose record is well-known, and the reference to Israeli democracy in this context, it is not my intention to go into a discussion of the nature of this democracy and its modus operandi, at least when it relates to the Israeli Arabs. This is not an issue for the Council to discuss for today. But suffice it to say that we are talking about occupied territories. We are talking about occupied East Jerusalem, the subject of 24 resolutions by the Council affirming that the Fourth Geneva Convention applies to it. After 24 resolutions from the Security Council the representative of Israel comes to claim that Israel is dealing with this part of the territory in consonance with Israeli democracy, instead of acting in consonance with international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the obligations of Israel as the occupying force. Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which is the third holy place, is part of East Jerusalem, which is part of the occupied Palestinian land. It belongs to the Muslims and must be under Palestinian-Arab-Muslim sovereignty, and we shall at no time, now or in the future, accept any claims of Israeli sovereignty over that part. At the same time, we have expressed our readiness to accept the control of Israel over the Wailing Wall, despite the fact that it is in the eastern, occupied section of Jerusalem. We accepted that out of respect for the religious beliefs of the other party, irrespective of what we feel or believe. But, Israel is now claiming rights over Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which can only be interpreted as a desire to change the status quo, perhaps desecrating existing holy places in the future. We do not think that this has any relation to any sincere religious sentiments.

The representative of Israel, Ambassador Lancry, said how much he and other Israelis were deeply moved by the death of the child, Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra. I do not deny that such personal feelings and emotions do exist. This is welcome, but what is the difference between the murder of Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra and the killing of other children? What is the difference between Mohammed, Ahmed, or Ali or any other name? The main difference here is that the camera of *Antenne 2* (of Canal France) captured that

brutal Israeli act in this specific case. The camera, and not the truth, is then what roused Israeli emotions. This is deeply regrettable and goes to show that Israel is bent on refusing to assume responsibility for the crime that took place.

We were hoping that we would hear Israel accepting responsibility, not only for Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra, not only because of the camera that captured that scene, but for all the other killings. We hoped that we would hear an apology from Israel to the families of the victims. This did not happen. This confirms that the international community must assume its responsibilities and put an end to this crime, impose the convening of an international commission of inquiry to find the truth and to punish those who are responsible and to make sure that such crimes are not repeated in the future.

I would like to refer to the Israeli allegation with regard to what they call the "incitement", or Palestinian violence or what they call the organization etc.

In our address to the Council, we said that only those who are incapable of seeing, or only a racist can make such an allegation. Now, we should add stupidity to those who have the courage to make such an allegation. Why? Because now there are many cameras, not only the one that captured the murder of Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra. Those cameras have exposed the truth of what has been happening to the whole world.

Other ugly scenes took place inside Israel itself. Did the Palestinian Authority plan or orchestrate what happened inside Israel itself? Did it incite the Israeli Arabs to do that? ... not, why then are there 11 dead and more than 100 wounded among the Israeli Arab? Israel has immediately to stop making such shameless allegations. This could be a genuine step towards admitting the truth and recognizing the humanity of the other party. Similarly, it could be the beginning of Israel's assuming and admitting its responsibilities. Without doing this, Israel cannot claim that it wants to make peace with the Palestinian people. It would not be possible to claim that they are willing to make peace.

There are some serious attempts to enable the Council to adopt a clear, constructive and useful position in consonance with the obligations of the Council and in defence of justice and the cause of peace in the region. In this respect, it is incumbent upon us to thank the members of the Non-Aligned Movement who are members in the Council and have tabled the draft resolution. We express our deep appreciation for the consultations that have taken place on this subject. We do hope that the Council will be able to take action and call for an urgent international inquiry into the incidents of the past few days.

Finally, we express our deep gratitude to all members of the Council and to all other States Members of the United Nations and others that participated in the debate over the past three days. They all spoke in defence of the meaning and the symbols of humanity, and in support of justice worldwide.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Before adjourning the meeting, I wish to announce to members of the Council that I intend to convene consultations of the whole this evening at 10 o'clock to consider the draft resolution that our experts are now busy working on.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.